



Ashland Food Co-op Found in Violation of Federal Labor Law

NLRB finds merit to 13 unfair labor practice charges at Ashland Food Co-op

The Ashland Food Co-op violated the rights of workers attempting to form a union. This is what investigators with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) found after investigating the evidence and reviewing the testimony of workers and management.

Thirteen of sixteen Unfair Labor Practice complaint (ULP's) were substantiated. This decision of the NLRB goes far to vindicate the workers who spoke up and also leads to the Ashland Food Co-op board facing settlement with NLRB and union organizers.

Since June of 2011 workers at Ashland Food Co-op have been struggling to improve their working conditions by organizing a union with United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 555.

According to complaints, Co-op management reacted swiftly with “heavy-handed tactics” to try and sway workers against organizing. According to the complaints, Co-op management actions included bribes and threats. Union activists were disciplined for organizing and employees threatened with discipline if they voted for a union.

The Co-op instituted a rule prohibiting employees from discussing the union and then selectively enforced this rule against employees who supported the union. Co-op management even went as far as coercing employees to sign an anti-union petition, a clear violation of labor law.

According to union organizers, the environment of open hostility and infringement of employee rights necessitated the filing of the unfair labor practice charges against the Co-op. The charges listed 16 counts of actions by management or Board of Directors that union organizers believed violated federal labor law. “I was shocked to see the Co-op follow in the footsteps of countless corporate employers who use fear and misinformation to dissuade workers from taking an active role in improving their workplace,” said Anne Dietz, Local 555 Director of Organizing.

After months of careful investigation and evidence gathering, the NLRB's regional office found sufficient evidence against the co-op management on a majority of the counts.

Evidence supported the following counts: Interrogating employees about their union support, sentiments and/or activities; making coercive statements to employees about the union and also making intimidating statements to employees to discourage union activity.

Workers were first reluctant to file their complaints as the process would slow the union organizing campaign. “We want Ashland Food Co-op to honor federal labor law and we want AFC to honor the vote of a majority of employees whether to form a union or not,” said Katie Hughes, a Front End employee at the Co-op. “A free and fair election is impossible when AFC is using threats, punishment and incentives to sway the vote. We first tried to stop the Co-op's interference through our in-house methods. We filed a charge with the NLRB reluctantly only after what we believe to be rampant and unrelenting violations of the law. We now hope that AFC will take appropriate actions, remedy the violations of federal law and safeguard employee free choice.”

The NLRB ruling has forced Co-op management to face the problems. Faced with the UFP charges the Co-op now has the choice to settle with the union and workers or continue to drag it out in court. Insiders, however, say a settlement is eminent.

As details emerge it will be up to the co-op board and management to sit down with workers and move towards a solution. Workers hope the environment at Ashland Food Co-op has not been so poisoned as to make a free and fair election impossible. Workers, owners and community supporters are planning the next stages of the campaign, hopefully in an environment absent of labor law violations and intimidation. For further news on the union struggle, go to www.justiceforcoopworkers.com.

Details of the 13 complaints substantiated by the National Labor Relations Board

Within the past six months, the Employer, by its supervisors, agents and/or Board of Directors, has interfered with, restrained, and coerced its employees in the exercise of their Section 7 rights by its actions including:

1. Recognizing, imposing, dominating, or otherwise supporting a labor organization through the recognition and maintenance of the “Staff Council”.
2. In the alternative, the Employer has violated the Act by telling employees that the Staff Council is their union, or is a de facto union, when the Staff Council is not, in fact, a legitimate labor organization.
3. Soliciting employee grievances in response to an organizing campaign.
4. Remedying employee grievances to discourage employee support for the Union.
5. Granting benefits to employees to discourage employee support for the Union.
6. Engaging in polling, surveillance, and/or interrogation by conducting meetings where employees were directed to share their grievances and sentiments about the union organizing.
7. Promulgating and maintaining a rule prohibiting union related conversations in work areas while allowing other non-work related conversations in work areas.
8. Prohibiting pro-union activities by employees while allowing anti-union activities by employees.
9. Interrogating employees about their union support, sentiments and/or activities.
10. Making coercive statements to employees about the Union.
11. Making intimidating statements to employees to discourage union activity.
12. Making implied threats to employees that more severe discipline would be given if the Union becomes the representative of employees.
13. Circulating an anti-union petition and/or solicited employee signatures on an anti-union petition.

Southern Oregon Labor Council Condemns Co-op Board

Southern Oregon Central Labor Council voted to condemn the anti-union actions of Ashland Food Co-op. In a letter to the co-op board, Southern Oregon Central Labor Council called on directors to “cease and desist these illegal actions.”

Central Labor Councils (CLC's) represent union employees and work collectively to organize, educate and mobilize workers, strengthen our community and create a powerful voice for working families. CLC's comprise the grassroots network of the labor movement's efforts to ensure that economic, education, health care and other policies benefit working families.

The text of the letter to the co-op board:

It has come to the attention of the Southern Oregon Central Labor Council that union busting tactics have been in full swing at the Ashland Food Co-op. Workers at AFC have been trying to form a union and have been met by flagrant disregard for federal labor law.

Thirteen out of sixteen Unfair Labor Practices filed with the National Labor Relations Board have been found to have merit. The environment at the Ashland Food Co-op has been poisoned by these violations.

You, the Board of Directors have responsibility for the well being of the workers. We ask you to lend a voice for a free and open union election. The Ashland Food Co-op needs to immediately cease and desist these illegal actions. This is a part of your sound management responsibility. There is no other way to move forward.

Sincerely Jim Alexander, President Southern Oregon Central Labor Council.

Ashland Cash Mob Supports Local Business

Ashland joined over 200 cities and communities to celebrate local businesses on National Cash Mob Day. “I’ve driven by this place numerous times and never stopped before today,” said one man at Pickled Planet during the Ashland Cash Mob. The idea behind a Cash Mob is simple, a locally owned business is targeted and locals



relationship and a friendship with the local business owner. We hope that the next time someone has a craving for sauerkraut or pickles, they will head to Water Street rather than a big box store.

“mob” at a pre-determined time to show up and purchase something from the merchant. Encouraging folks to try new local businesses is a large part of what cash mobs are all about, but it is also the hope that they will like the place and begin to develop a

Pickled Planet was an easy choice for this first Cash Mob. The folks at Pickled Planet are active supporters of our community. They support local farmers and provide delicious, in raw foods which are distributed throughout the Rogue Valley and the States. Their organic sauerkraut is a good source of vitamin C and types of B vitamins. You’ll find other products at Pickled Planet too including organic fermented sodas.

There were about 50 people at our first cash mob. They showed up over a two hour period and many tried local products for the first time. Another positive aspect of the mob was that the business got mainstream press from KDRV Channel 12 and the Mail Tribune. Those stories reached a wide audience and generated more attention to Pickled Planet.

We’d never planned a cash mob before, so all of this was a learning experience for us. We were happy with the results and think it was successful. Several days after the mob we are still hearing a “buzz” about it around town, and that tells us that this is something that Ashland supports. Aren’t we lucky to live in a community that supports local farmers, locally grown food and local business owners?

If you would like to participate in the next Cash Mob you can email AshlandFreePress@activist.com or call 541-622-9483 for details.

Free Press Offers New Models for Community

Six months ago we were preparing for an October gathering and Jason started putting together a single page newspaper. That first issue of the Ashland Free Press was distributed during the October 6 action in the plaza and looking back on that, neither of us thought it was something that would evolve into this. We printed 500 of the first edition that morning and they were gone by the afternoon.

We didn’t think we were starting a newspaper, (who starts writing a newspaper on a whim), but we did have more to say. Every issue was met with deep appreciation from all of you and one led into another and another and another and now we are at issue 10. We may not have set out to become publishers, but the valley is so hungry for social justice news and here we are, six months later with so much to report on. There’s no end in sight.

One thing that independent media can offer is that we do things differently. We aren’t a regular newspaper. We don’t hide our biases. We shy away from ads, but it has become obvious to us that we want to include information about locally owned businesses in our own way. Some of our readers attended the first Cash Mob at Pickled Planet and we are committed to celebrating a local Ashland business each month. Can you think of any publication that literally rounds up and brings

in customers? See, we told you we think outside the box and do things in a unique way. Forget ads, this is about building relationships with each other and making friends. We hope that these cash mobs are wildly successful and that by trying new businesses you find some favorites and make them a part of your daily routine.

We can’t do this all by ourselves and we are so grateful to everyone who is helping with contributing and distributing. We know there are always more stories out there waiting to be told, and we’ll be here to share them. Submissions (400-500 words are best) can be sent to ashlandfreepress@activist.com.

We have been experimenting with different models for sustainability and discovered the best strategy is not to worry too much about advertising and paid subscriptions, but to simply encourage folks to donate what they can.

Your financial support helps keeps us publishing. Donating is easy. Checks can be made to “Ashland Free Press” to 258 A Street #1-20, Ashland, OR. You can donate via Paypal to Jason@ksq.org.

We offer mailed subscriptions by request. Please keep watching for new issues of AFP, support our sponsors and plug into the next cash mob.

Kindly,
Jason and Vanessa Houk

Anti-Assembly Law Threatens Free Speech

By Herbert Rothschild

How threatening to civil liberties—especially free assembly and free speech—is H.R. 347, the “Federal Restricted Buildings and Grounds Improvement Act of 2011” that an almost-unanimous Congress passed in early March? Is it a heavy-handed response to the Occupy movement, potentially criminalizing much of its activity?

Progressive change activists are understandably wary, given the recent passage of the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Provisions of that law give the President the power to abolish habeas corpus, an indispensable bulwark against governmental tyranny. NDAA authorizes the President to order the assassination or incarceration of any person—including a US citizen—anywhere in the world without charge or trial. That assault on fundamental freedom is intolerable and must be defeated.

Unlike NDAA, H.R. 347 is not heinous on its face. Indeed, as the title of the law says, it is supposedly an updating (an “improvement”) of a long-standing trespass law, amended several times since its passage in 1971, that covers areas subject to heightened Secret Service security measures. These can include any place where individuals who enjoy Secret Service protection visit, and large public events like the Super Bowl and the presidential nominating conventions. Nor has the penalty for infraction been increased: a fine and a year in jail for simple trespass.

What is worrisome are at least two features of the new law that may extend governmental power to restrict protests.

The more important one is that the Department of Homeland Security has been given the power, and the discretion, to designate which events

qualify as events warranting restrictions on protests. For example, meetings of groups like the G-8 or the International Monetary Fund, which have attracted opponents of the global elite economic order these groups serve, could be so designated. Even annual meetings of corporations like General Electric could be designated. No trespassing perimeters of several blocks could be established, thus effectively removing protests from visibility.

Another provision of concern is that the original law required the government to prove that defendants “willfully and knowingly” committed the crime of trespass. H.R. 347 only requires that the defendants “knowingly” trespassed, meaning they knew they were in a restricted area but not that it was a crime to be there.

The national ACLU’s reading of H.R. 347 (see <https://www.aclu.org/blog/free-speech/how-big-deal-hr-347-criminalizing-protest-bill>) is far less alarmist than some reports circulating on the Internet. It believes that we must see how the law is being enforced before we can know whether dissent will be repressed more than it already has been.

But there is a trend of rule-making that tries to marginalize dissent quite literally. Experienced protesters already know the frustration of being herded into barricaded areas fairly removed from the locations that are the focus of protest. Locations like sidewalks and public plazas, traditionally open to First Amendment exercise and public view, may more frequently be declared off-limits. H.R. 347 increases the likelihood that “holding pens” will be the norm, not the exception, for public demonstrations associated with particular public persons or the oppressive institutions so many of them serve.

**Co-op
Values
=
Union
Values**

Water Security Requires Responsible Community

By Ghost of the Republic

After attending the recent water system confab over at SOU, I realized that Ashland is about to decide how to spend \$30+ million on new water system upgrades. The council is staged to make a decision and is reported to begin discussions in April. Now the water situation is worth addressing and spending money on, but only if it includes a much healthier dose of prevention and systems strategy than the plan as it has been presented. I would like to see discussion of an efficient and integrated system of water capture, water movement, storage, purification and remediation, with all options available to us in the 21st century.

The city is poised to spend all this money, so all of us that really see and feel the opportunity to retrofit appropriately and attain maximum efficient use of our resources, might as well stand up and be counted! We need to make a voice of many to push the design envelope and think way out of the box. We have an opportunity here to make an alternative plan, or force open discussion of long-term issues and efficient use of dwindling resources. How communities choose to play their cards now, will greatly affect how livable those places are either by cost of living or resource availability. We all still pay for the fiber network. It's clear that expensive mistakes can be made by the city council and administrators. I don't want to pay for this plan without first hearing more ecological options and seeing the council seriously discuss and converse with the people. These are big choices, 30 million of 'em, and we deserve and demand to be heard! And this should take some time too, this choice shouldn't be made quickly just because the plan was finally unveiled.

The priority of building long-term design efficiencies into all human systems must not continue to be sidelined. We got here, but to continue on we must shed our cultural childhood and embrace the fringes of perception. All of us have fringes, all of us can stretch and expand. This water system is a perfect way to point out certain truths and options for aging infrastructure.

Please, if you care about your water bill, if you care about use of resources, if you care about appropriate design and ecological solutions, than get involved. Study the plan posted on the city's website, demand a hard copy, go to council chambers when they are discussing it, but most of all, write to the council and let them know this design is not sufficient considering the technologies and design options that are available.

A little background, Ashland creek has flood events every 20 years or so. They knock out our treatment plant, which was ill placed by the early planners. Sometime after the indigenous population was exterminated, the city was given control over our watershed when the Federals created the National Forest. This was in recognition of Ashland's previous care and obvious need to continue caring for our fresh water source. A little while later the TID started bringing additional fresh water from the cascades to build the agricultural opportunities for the semi arid bear creek valley. A couple months ago the city gave back the national forest special use permit that controls crucial upper sections of that same watershed to a group of mostly wealthy white men who aim to put ski slopes on top of some important feeder springs into our watershed, that could very

well diminish the quantity and quality of our fresh water. Fast forward, but not too fast or you'll be in the future, and that brings us to the present time, when the city is poised to decide how to cure our "future water needs."

Now aside from the obvious mistake, that we have lost control over the upper east end of our water source, our city planners, both salaried and volunteer, have produced a plan that is missing the big picture. They mentioned future water usage estimates and the need to meet those. They mentioned the loss of our ill placed treatment plant in storms and the need to slowly move away from dependence on it. They mentioned a need to upgrade and modify our sewage treatment plant to reduce the temperature of Bear creek. They mentioned putting the TID canal into a below ground pipe to save evaporation and keep dog poop out of it. Good one for sure. They all just lacked vision and respect for the resource and systems that was deeper than financial cost.

An example would be the sewage plant. They need to adjust how the sewage is treated so they can keep dumping the effluent into Bear creek. They only offered solutions to lower the water temp of the creek by planting trees. A great thing to do, but the city routinely cuts overhanging branches all over Ashland creek as it runs through park and town, warming the water with solar exposure. Um folks, can anyone pronounce the word Silo?

Lets look at the whole program, shall we...

Poop in a toilet full of fresh, treated, drinking water. Is anyone else feeling stupid about pooping in drinking water? Flush it down and it mixes with the rest of your "grey" water rather than staying on its own. In some parts of town, if not all, the household grey/black water, mixes with street and yard run off and ends up all together at the treatment plant. Does it make sense to put it all together? Seems like it's more water the plant has to treat yes? Once its there, is there any biological angle or ecosystem integration with all that fertilizer? The sewage guy, when questioned, remembered some distant "experiment" they had done attempting to biologically remediate the water. Probably before the latest systems were developed and with little if any, appropriate consulting. His attitude was like, "well we tried that once." Is there any more looking into the biological angles for treatment, or changing the pipes, or providing composting toilets for those willing? Average households flush 30+ gallons per day. That's fresh water people, worlds' most precious commodity. Is it even legal to have a composting toilet in Ashland?

To be honest, I was a little ashamed to be at that meeting. To see the people who have the power to move things content to just put in some easy fixes. They claimed it would be too expensive to change pipes, or deliver more irrigation water, un treated, for peoples yards and gardens. The city has TID rights for 138 acres, that is a lot of water. They claimed this was the only raft of solutions that could ferry us into water secure nirvana. Well I for one disagree and am calling all of you who care and who don't want your water bill to rise 30-50% to band together and make yourself heard in the council chambers. The city council is slated to decide this issue in April, so NOW IS THE TIME, to either shit or get off the pot! Thanks to all the effort that has been done so far, now lets do more!

compiling a list of professionals who are willing to volunteer their time. If you are a mental health specialist, please contact Heidi at parkershames@opendoor.com

In related news, it seems that the port-a-potty that was recently installed near Lithia Park to provide restroom access for Ashland's homeless is well used. According to Carol Voisin the maintenance crew reports that it has been free from any acts of vandalism, but that the city neglected to place a garbage can near it. This was one of three port-a-potties that the homelessness ad hoc committee requested from the city and the decision to grant one port-a-potty was offered on a trial basis. One would hope that city officials see the need to provide a garbage can so this will be successful. Public restrooms within the park close early leaving our homeless population with nowhere to go. Aside from being a public health and human right concern, access to such basic needs are a matter of human dignity. We call upon the city to resolve this quickly.

They might decide to stop lobbying for laws which serve themselves and harm others, especially economically. They might lobby for laws which help the impoverished help themselves: labor laws, for example. And tax laws. Their businesses might actually start paying taxes, say 10% to start with. They might hire more workers instead of laying them off. And pay a living wage.

They could support laws regulating the financial industries, so that folks will regain trust in banks and brokers.

Let's really dream: The 1% could bring manufacturing back to the U.S. This certainly will let them boast of their patriotism, and they'll find buyers in those of us who have been waiting to buy quality U.S. products.

The 1% don't have to do any of this alone. The 99% are already working on it.

Ashland's Homeless: A Visible Concern

an editorial by Vanessa Houk

It's a boy, and a girl, and a boy and a girl and actually I don't quite know how to break the news to you, but as of now you have 71 more children. I know that's a lot to take in. It was for us too, but you see the 71 homeless kids who are enrolled in Ashland Public Schools are our kids. They belong to us just as much as the children who share our last names.

Or at least I think we better start thinking that way. How else can we break the cycle of poverty? Of those 71 children, how many will become teen parents? How many will wind up in the juvenile justice system? Let's aim for zero.

There are more than 1800 homeless kids in Jackson County. These are kids who are couch surfing, have moved more than three times in one year, and whose safety and well-being is dependent upon how well they can be invisible. That cloak of invisibility makes them more vulnerable to crime. In 2010 the International Human Rights Clinic at Willamette University College of Law issued a report which states, "the vulnerability of potential victims, especially minors, to sex trafficking in Southern Oregon and rural towns is increasing, with sex crimes involving prostituted children and "survival sex"

Feed the Hungry, Face Arrest

By Vanessa Houk

Las Vegas, Orlando, Philadelphia, New York. Instead of being a list of "must visit" places, these cities now represent an unsettling trend that appears to be gaining momentum. If this was a game of Jeopardy, the question would be "what are places that criminalize kindness." Offering meals for homeless people in public spaces seems logical enough, considering that if you are homeless and have nowhere to go, you'd probably wind up in a public space, but cities across the United States are cracking down on individuals and charities who offer free meals to those who are hungry.



In Orlando, good Samaritans face a \$500 fine and up to 60 days in jail for feeding hungry groups of people in city parks. Oh wait, make that hungry, poor people. Company picnics are still welcome. In Las Vegas, folks who regularly hand out food to homeless residents in city parks face misdemeanor charges, and can be punished by a fine of up to \$1,000 or a jail term of up to six months, or both. New York is a little softer in that it isn't illegal to feed homeless people in

incidents among runaway and homeless youth on the rise. Trends in Oregon, where more adults are travelling to Southern Oregon to have sex with children they have met online, confirm studies showing that rural children are the ones most often lured into prostitution, not inner city children."

In other words, it's dangerous to be a homeless kid in Oregon.

Jackson County has an effective child abuse prevention campaign, "Don't turn away." We have to take that a step further and include the youngest victims of homelessness. We have to see them. We have to see that they matter.

What can we do? The Maslow Project is a Medford day use center for homeless youth of Jackson County. They can always use more community support and volunteers to help keep the center running. They keep a food pantry on site and are always in need of healthy ready to eat foods and snacks, hygiene items and more. Call (541)608-6868 for more information. Ashland does not currently have a drop in center for homeless people, but readers can let the Ashland City Council know that this is something you support.

public spaces there, but still restrictive in that home cooked meals cannot be donated to homeless shelters. Mayor Bloomberg has said that institutionalized food meets safety and nutritional standards, no matter the fall out.

This week the Mayor of Philadelphia announced plans to make it illegal to feed homeless people in parks throughout the city. There is a 30 day period for public comments, but this is expected to become law. Currently there are groups who offer meals to homeless people on a regular basis in a Philly park located near the Barnes Foundation Building, a 200 million dollar art museum which is scheduled to open in late May. Critics maintain that the timing of this new ordinance is not a coincidence and Philadelphia is just trying to hide homeless people from tourists.

"I guess the politicians must worry about how their community looks with homeless people in it. They might not get re-elected, so if you "force" the homeless to move on then everything must be fine, right? Wrong, but what we don't see, won't make us think, right?," says Kathy Rink. She continues, "I say that making it illegal for the common person to feed the homeless is a way not to address the issue but rather a hope of the elite to 'move them on' to another community so that it can become their problem."

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As we were going to press Central Point announced a new ordinance against panhandling which goes into effect in 30 days. Both motorists and homeless can face fines of \$75 for the exchange of money, food or other items. Central Point police say the ordinance was proposed after citizens complained about an increase in transients who panhandle at the I-5 freeway entrance. They also cited safety concerns. Do you see this as a First Amendment issue? Call the Central Point mayor at 541-664-3321 ext. 231 and express what you think of this new ordinance.

Ashland Free Press ONLINE
Ashlandfreepress.wordpress.com

Occupy the Banks Report From the Front Lines

By Anonymous

February 29th 2012 will go down in my personal history as the day I first felt my own power in our democratic process. I exercised my right to free speech and felt heard for one of the first times in my life.

It was a day when there had been a national call for a general strike against corporations that were members of ALEC (check out http://alecexposed.org/wiki/ALEC_Exposed_for_details) , the first of many general strikes planned for this year.

I never believed those of us here in the small Rogue Valley would make much of an impact. I thought we would parade through the bank we had picked as our target (BoFA), with our signs, and be asked to leave. I figured maybe a few of us would stay to get arrested, but most of us would leave when asked. I figured we would stand around outside with our signs and talk to people about why we were there as they went in and out of the bank. We knew that as long as we were on the public sidewalk that we were within our rights to say whatever we wanted to anyone listening. I hear a couple of us got inside the bank and mic checked the bank, but I wasn't part of that group, I just stood outside with my sign.

I never expected that the bank would be feeling so nervous that they would hire a rent-a-cop just for the day. Or that they would actually put a closed sign on

the front door and make people walk around to the back parking lot and enter only there; and only with the assistance of the rent-a-cop acting as door man. I thought the whole thing was positively hilarious!

I especially loved the guy out front who was wearing a pig mask and masquerading as a bankster! I want one of those masks.

We were going to convene across the street in a coffee shop for a cool down meeting, but the guys didn't want to let the bank re-open it's doors. One of us put one of our signs up in front of the closed door, but the cop (a real one there assisting the rent-a-cop) who had been watching us down the street came over and chewed out the guy who did it, threatening to arrest him, but alas no one got arrested. Someone informed me that the cop had grown up in Ashland and was being nice to us, being used to protesters and all. After all he must know by now he's part of the 99%.

The guys were still standing out front when I left around 3 p.m. All in all it was one of the more satisfying events I've experienced with Occupy Medford, Ashland and Klamath Falls so far. We missed Grants Pass presence, but we know they're out there. Follow us on Facebook and our on own sites. Look for more events; educational and direct actions. We're just getting started!

Thoughts on the 1 %

By Ken Deveney

What would it mean for the 1% to get religion and decide to be part of the solution? It doesn't necessarily mean they'd give all their money to the poor, but there are places they could put their money that would help; they might profit from doing so, they might not--that should be beside the point. They could:

- help banks renegotiate mortgages.
- invest in renewable energy (also creates jobs).
- donate to social agencies such as Access.
- support schools.
- eliminate the conditions which make people want to turn to drugs. They may need some advice from a few people in the 99% who have learned how to have meaningful, unstressed lives.
- do everything possible to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



April Fool's Edition

Some True, Some False, All Fun



Natural Gas Discovered in D.C.

By Andy Seles

This morning it was leaked to the press that a huge amount of natural gas was discovered in Washington, D.C., ironically, immediately after another fracking debate in Congress.

"We can't confirm or deny the amount of gas discovered," said White House press secretary Jay Carney.

Lobbyists from BP, Chevron, Exxon-Mobil and other energy corporations immediately swooped down on the capital from high atop their headquarters next door to Congress.

"If this is true," said an excited but nervous BP CEO Robert Dudley, "rest assured that BP has the best technology and equipment ready to extract the gas."

"We're putting the squeeze on OUR representatives to basically privatize the houses of both the Senate and Congress," said Chevron chief John Watson. "As far as we can tell, those two locations are ground zero for the source of the supply. Regardless, we are the experts who have the skill and know-how to do the necessary probing to find the source."

In our efforts to find the initial source of the "gas leak," we spoke to Madge Mahoney, a cleaning lady who regularly cleans the Senate chambers. Madge laughed knowingly when we mentioned the gas discovery. "Hell, yes, she said. There's plenty of gas to be found in both Houses of Congress...been that way for years. It

got really intense when they were debating the tax extension and Keystone XL; I had to wear a respirator those times. Everything kinda clears out, however, during congressional recess."

A staff member at the GAO (who asked for anonymity) claims that the gas odor emitted from House and Senate has actually been charted by his office for many years. "It seems to escalate on a fairly regular basis," he said. The graph he showed us showed a marked increase in gas emission readings every year before an election for over the past forty years it has been charted.

Our research finally led us to Jimmy Johnson. Mr. Johnson, a Capitol Hill janitor for over 25 years, who now resides in his childhood hometown of New Orleans where he is a part-time doorman at the new Harrah's New Orleans casino hotel. He validated both Ms. Mahoney and the GAO. "Oh my...ooh...yaaes! he exclaimed when we asked about the gas discovery. "Dey's ben lotsa gas in dem buildin's...alls the times I wuz workin' der, right from de git go. Fact o' da matta is, dey got to calling Joe Lieberman GeoO-Thermal Lieberman," he chuckled. "Dey can drill all they wants," he added, "but if dey wants to find da one source of dat gas...well 'good luck' 'szall I ken say. De folks be better off plug-in' da vents 'n lightin' a match, yessir!" When we asked Mr. Johnson how he ended up as a doorman at a plush new hotel in New Orleans, he just smiled a broad, toothless grin and said, "25 years in da Capitol, c'mon Bro; I got me knections."

A letter from Hellen Keller to Eugene V. Debs

Of course, the Supreme Court has sustained the decision of the lower court in your case. To my mind, the decision has added another laurel to your wreath of victories. Once more you are going to prison for upholding the liberties of the people.

I write because my heart cries out, and will not be still. I write because I want you to know that I should be proud if the Supreme Court convicted me of abhorring war, and doing all in my power to oppose it. When I think of the millions who have suffered in all the wicked wars of the past, I am shaken with the anguish of a great impatience. I want to fling myself against all brute powers that destroy life and break the spirit of man.

In the persecution of our comrades there is one satisfaction. Every trial of men like you, every sentence against them, tears away the veil that hides the face of the enemy. The discussion and agitation that follows the trials define more sharply the positions that must be taken before all men can live together in peace, happiness and security.

We were driven into the war for liberty, democracy and humanity. Behold what is happening all over the world today! Oh, where is the swift vengeance of Jehovah, that it does not fall upon the hosts of those who are marshalling machine guns against hunger-stricken people? It is the complacency of madness to call such acts

"preserving law and order." Law and order! What oceans of blood and tears are shed in their name! I have come to loathe traditions and institutions that take away the rights of the poor and protect the wicked against judgment.

The wise fools who sit in the high places of justice fail to see that, in revolutionary times like the present, vital issues are settled, not by statutes, decrees and authorities, but in spite of them. Like the Girondins of France, they imagine that force can check the onrush of revolution. Thus they sow the wind, and unto them shall be the harvest of the whirlwind.

You dear comrade! I have long loved you because you are an apostle of brotherhood and freedom. For years I have thought of you as a dauntless explorer going towards the dawn and, like a humble adventurer, I have followed in the trail of your footsteps. From time to time the greetings that have come back to me from you have made me very happy, and now I reach out my hand and clasp yours through prison bars.

With heartfelt greetings, and with a firm faith that the cause for which you are now martyred shall be all the stronger because of your sacrifice and devotion, I am,

Yours for the revolution--may it come swiftly, like a shaft sundering the dark!

First Published: New York Call, April 29, 1919; Appeal to Reason, May 17, 1919 Source: Helen Keller: Her Socialist Years (International Publishers, 1967)



Senate Approves JOBS Bill

By Hugh Gadda B. Kiddin

Today the U.S. Senate approved House bill HR. 3606, sending it back to Congress for ultimate passage.

"I'm proud to say that today the U.S. Senate approved a House sponsored bill that will go a long way to making the United States the next Argentina," said Senate leader John Boehner.

One of the major features of so-called "Jobs (Jumpstart Our Business Startups) Act is that it will allow small firms to raise money online and from social media, otherwise known as "crowdsourcing," (among Progressives known as "crowdmuppeting"). Most importantly, it will also allow start up firms to solicit up to one million dollars from fund-raising websites. Those who think a start up has a chance to succeed and who want to invest can now become shareholders.

"This is terrific," said Mitch McConnell, after the bi-partisan 27-23 vote. "Now all that divisive talk about trickle-down economics is moot. Let the peasants raise their own f-#*ing capital."

"Yes, this is definitely great news," seconded an ebullient Stephen Fincher (R. TN), sponsor of the original House bill. "Imagine in every town across this great nation, every person an entrepreneur! You can start up any business imaginable and maybe even hang those lazy government workers out to dry. Just think of the possibilities: "Potholes R Us" or how about "CollectaCan?" Graham went onto explain that "CollectaCan" could employ thousands of homeless people who would bring their cans to a central location in exchange for "more valuable" shares in the company instead of money.

"I think a lot of elderly people eating catfood are gonna want in on these start-ups," said John Boehner. "We got rid of those pesky SEC regulations that were put in place after the Enron accounting scandal; that should give these small start-ups some breathing room."

Libby Doe, a single mom in Dayton, Ohio isn't waiting for the House to pass the bill. She's already taking her Ebay business to the next level. "I'm writing up my prospectus, now," she said. Her business, "Bearly Legal," features teddy bears, scantily clad in, well, you guessed it...teddies.

"It's a niche business," she said, "but I just know it's going to fly."

HR 3606, also known as the "Reopening America to Participating Entrepreneurs" (RAPE) has received enormous support by CEOs on Wall-Street. "It will help small companies access the capital markets," said Nasdaq Executive V.P. Bruce Angst. "We look forward to the new, innovative trading rules that will ameliorate the unnecessary and confusing transparency that still exists. The average citizen will now be in on the game that WallStreet has perpetu...perfected in the last thirty years. Frankly, we think the people are hungry to trust new companies."

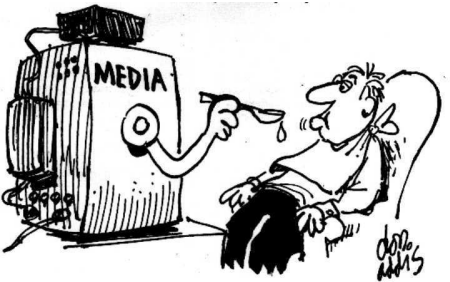
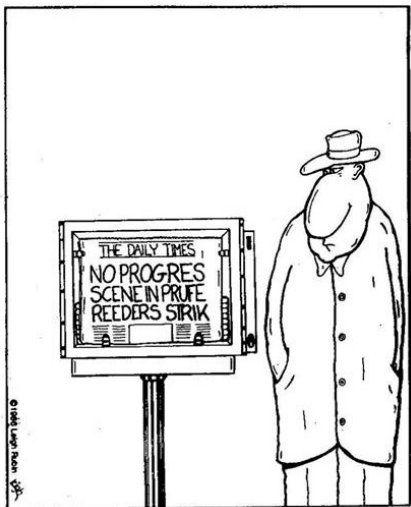
Ann T. Dotes' marketing idea, right here in the Rogue Valley, involves a GMO patent involving the ubiquitous gopher snake and the olive tree that grows well in the region. "We haven't quite perfected plant-to-animal genetic transference yet," she said, however, we are right on the cusp of producing an olive oil produced by the snake."

"Man on the street" interest seem high. Clay Pidgin, one of the few people in Ashland who still works for somebody, told us he was very excited about the snake oil.

Did You Know?

A college student costs the state \$8,667 per year; a prisoner costs it \$45,006 a year.

<http://bit.ly/GLfsgg>



Did You Know?

By 2037, health insurance will swallow your entire paycheck. Even if the health reform law does succeed in bringing down health-care costs, we're still on track for insurance premiums to surpass average household income by 2037.

<http://wapo.st/yx6XVW>

Don't we wish it were so...

By Deb Vanpoolen

LEON PANETTA, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, SHARES NEW IDEA WITH HOMELESS MAN

Leon Panetta, Secretary of the US Department of Defense, visited a homeless shelter in disguise as a homeless man on Tuesday, March 20. The homeless shelter Panetta visited is located near the national mall; he went to the shelter on his lunch break. After getting some soup and bread, Panetta spent most of his time at the shelter talking with one particular homeless man named Mike.

The person in whom Panetta confided, Mike Smith, is an Iraq war veteran who lost one of his legs after another soldier accidentally shot him in his thigh. Because he is missing a leg, Mike has not been able to find a job since he returned from serving his country in Afghanistan. His wife died last year of cancer because they could not afford health insurance. His one daughter went to Alaska to work on a fishing boat so she could pay off her student loans. His one son was killed last month in Iraq. Mike's savings ran out two months ago so he could no longer afford to live in his house. After living on the streets of DC for a few weeks, he found out about the homeless shelter and has been there for one month.

After the homeless man confided in Leon for a while, Leon started to feel relaxed. He asked if Mike would mind listening to his woes. After Mike said "Lay it on me.", Panetta began speaking through tears. Panetta, Secretary of Defense, said he wanted to quit his job because he was feeling "so stressed out and embarrassed by what his men were doing in Afghanistan and Iraq." The latest story from Kandahar, Afghanistan, of one soldier on his fourth tour of duty, a trained sniper who had suffered brain damage in Iraq, who killed sixteen Afghan civilians in their homes and lit four of the children on fire. . . .He could barely get out the words as he wept.

Panetta spent a few moments in silence staring at the ground.

Then he gathered himself and looked at Mike. Mike thought something about Panetta looked different. Leon told Mike that after hearing this latest report from Kandahar, he decided he could not live another day without making some major changes at his workplace. Panetta asked if he could run his new

idea for improving the Department of Defense by Mike. When Mike said, "Lay it on me," Panetta was overwhelmed with joy. Leon started jumping up and down, throwing his arms in the air like a little boy. He then sat down and pulled his chair right up next to Mike's.

He grinned as he leaned forward, whispering, "I am going to hire Bradley Manning to lead workshops for all enlisted men at every US military base around the whole world!"

Mike's jaw dropped and his eyes popped open in disbelief. "What on earth will those workshops be about?" he asked.

"They will be called, 'How to Listen to Your Conscience 101!'" Panetta jumped up and yelled aloud: "YES! YOUR CONSCIENCE! YOUR CONSCIENCE!"

Then he sat down, still beaming with happiness, and asked Mike, "What do you think of that for a title and a topic?"

"Wow. That actually makes a lot of sense to me, Leon. I think you should go for it!" Mike replied.

See our next issue for a report on Bradley Manning's workshops!

ASSANGE GIVEN SURPRISE TASK UPON VISIT TO USA

President Obama, having been inspired by the game-changing windfall from Leon Panetta, decided to join in on the fun. Obama called up the manager of the New York Yankees baseball team.

"Hey, whadya say we show Julian Assange a true American experience when he visits the US soon? We'll surprise him. He thinks he is coming to the US to be indicted, but I would rather, ha-ha, throw him a curve ball when he arrives. How would you feel if I ask HIM to throw the first pitch of the season this year instead of me?"

"Well, whatever you say, Mr. President. But, uh, does he know how to throw a baseball?"

"We might just have to show him how things are done in this country! I think it will all turn out just fine." President Barack Obama replied.



Did You Know?

3 months of the Pentagon's budget is enough money to make higher education in the United States free for all Americans.

<http://bit.ly/AcqOxy>

Blue Strawberries

coming to a store near you?

Scientists have found that the "Arctic Flounder Fish" produces an antifreeze to protect itself in freezing waters.

The gene that regulates the production of the antifreeze trait was taken from the Arctic Flounder fish and genetically introduced into the strawberry plant. As a result, a genetically modified strawberry plant was formed.

The GM strawberry plant can withstand icy freezing temperatures; thus wouldn't degrade or turn into mush after being placed in the freezer. No research yet, however, on what it will do when placed in the human body.

A Victory for Portland!

The Parasol Climate Collective, which initiated a clown picket for the scheduled March Republican Debate to be held in Portland, claimed victory when the debate was cancelled.

The first candidate to pull out of the debate was Mitt Romney, initially stating the he "didn't feel like going." When pressed, Romney admitted he was "too shaky in the polls to risk going to Portland to be embarrassed by a bunch of clowns." This left the other three candidates, and led to the scrambling of local Republicans in the face of mounting opposition.

Rick Santorum pulled out next saying that he did not want to go to a "degenerate place like Portland anyway," and that the last thing his surging campaign needed was to be confronted by "thousands of clowns, most of them probably high on medical marijuana." He said he doesn't understand how Parasol can be so concerned about rising carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, elaborating "there's nothing wrong with carbon dioxide - just ask plants." He said that the people of Portland made him confront his own views on abortion, proposing, "The people of Portland should probably be allowed to abort, if it'd help keep their numbers down." Ron Paul disagreed with this, saying women "never have a right to abortion," preferring instead "targeted assassination." Paul pulled out after first Hella 503, then Occupy Portland, endorsed Parasol's Clown Picket, saying the momentum and level of opposition was "just too overwhelming" making his "little head spin."

Newt Gingrich was reportedly ready to come to Portland by himself, offering to have his earlier self debate his current self. He said that the Gingrich that appeared with Nancy Pelosi in a TV spot advocating the importance of fighting climate change would debate the current Gingrich, who says it's "all a bunch of leftist baloney."

Parasol member Clowny McClownerstein said "The cancellation of the Republican debate, coming as it does on the heels of the recent relocation of the G8 from Chicago to Camp David, shows the forces of oppression are clearly on the run in the face of the fierce organization of the people."

PARADOX TIME...

This Sentence Is False.

Play Performance to Benefit Occupy Ashland

by *Andy Seles & Joanna Goff*

An explosion on April 20, 2010 aboard the Deepwater Horizon, a drilling rig working on a well for BP one mile below the surface of the Gulf of Mexico led to the largest accidental oil spill in history. Residents who live along the coast, all the way from Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana to western Florida continue to suffer acute symptoms attributed to ongoing exposure to toxic chemicals being released from BP's crude oil and the toxic Corexit dispersants used to sink the oil. Thousands of deaths along the Gulf Coast region have been linked to this toxic damage. This devastation is deemed by many in the health and science field as the equivalent of Agent Orange in Vietnam.

In her recent essay *Towards a Visible Theatre*, playwright Caridad Svich wrote, "Theatre is a public forum. Writing for the theatre and live performance thus demands engagement with the world. To write a play is a civic act, or at the very least the articulation of a desire to take part in a civic dialogue with society. Broad questions of identity and human rights enter very much into the frame of a play's vision." Her newest play, *The Way of Water*, will be given a free staged reading at Rogue Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Hall on Monday, April 9 at 7 pm. All donations at the door will benefit OCCUPY ASHLAND. *The Way of Water* deals with the aftermath of the BP oil spill; the play was released to groups around the globe to commemorate the disaster by humanizing the people and their suffering. In the play, two Louisiana gulf fishermen and their wives struggle with humor and grace for survival as their health, vitality and livelihood have been severely disrupted by the toxic environment.

Joanna Goff, a teacher/actor/director, has assembled a cast that includes Trevor Mather, Fiona Fire, Thomas Letchworth and Jazmin Roque. Letchworth, who plays the role of fisherman Yuki, recently stated: "The arts and the artistic process offer themselves up as tremendously powerful tools for social change. Through art people gain inspiration, hone creativity and develop passion, all of which are invaluable assets to the would-be activist. Art and creativity have the ability to cut through the barriers of race, class and location in a way that no other mechanism can. In this way the pen, paintbrush and body are truly mightier than the sword."

Eddie Lee, who was originally cast as fisherman Jimmy Robichaux, writes: "So why protest and activate socially? I believe this play demonstrates why it is now so important for us all to finally turn our attention to the world around us, and begin extending our support to one another. The Way of Water is populated by rich characters that help tap us into our humanity, and then invites us to walk in the shoes of those who face life in the wake of the Gulf of Mexico BP oil tragedy. This art, the Art of Theatre--among the many forms of creative expression--enables the greatest movement that any one can make: to move mind and heart, so as to build the most important thing that anyone could possibly create. Community. It is time we recognize the Arts for the power and value that they really are."

Fiona Fire, who plays Rosalie, explains her involvement: "For me playing Rosalie is a joyful burden. She has shown me my own anger and sadness with fresh clarity. Sharing this story allows us to embark on a very real grieving process. Any illusions we may hold that the spill happened "over there" or "to them" are quickly dispelled in the face of such honest storytelling. The destruction of the spill is felt by all, and it is our sacred duty to tell the truth, grieve, and heal together."

Caridad Svich is a US Latina playwright, translator, lyricist and editor. She received the 2011 American Theatre Critics Association Primus Prize for her play *The House of the Spirits*, based on the novel by Isabel Allende. Her works have been presented across the US and abroad at diverse venues, including Denver Center Theatre, Mixed Blood Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Repertorio Espanol, 59East59, McCarren Park Pool, 7 Stages, Salvage Vanguard Theatre, Teatro Mori (Santiago, Chile), ARTheater (Cologne), and Edinburgh Fringe Festival/UK. Svich states, "Making a play is in and of itself a fragile game that involves the particular relationship between and among collaborators...a tough and tender affair that demands courage, a strong sense of humor and a great deal of commitment...a writer writes because...Writers write because...a writer Rights."

Save the date for an evening of empowering theatre. April 9 at 7 pm. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 87 4th St. For more information contact Andy Seles at andyseles@gmail.com or 541-727-2677.

OCCUPY THE SPRING

"Occupy the Earth" March and General Assembly

Sunday, April 22nd,
42nd Earth Day

*Environment, Peace,
Cooperation for 100%*



Join in solidarity with other occupiers throughout the US and world protesting the exploitation of Mother Earth and her limited resources. We will have a march to meet with other Occupies, community organizations, local businesses, activists in Talent at the Talent Community Center. In solidarity with the Occupy Movement, Occupy the Trees, and Mother Earth. Come one and come all! Bring your instruments/drums!

Occupy Medford General Assembly

Bringing the community together to discuss problems and solutions.
Medford Public Library 205 South Central Avenue
Saturday 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Coming Soon:

Southern Oregon Spring Awakening

Please Support Ashland Free Press

Your financial support helps keep AFP in print and moves us towards expansion. Donating is easy. Checks can be made to "Ashland Free Press" to 258 A Street #1-20, Ashland, OR. You can donate via Paypal to Jason@KSKQ.ORG.

Thank you to everyone who've helped support our efforts in highlighting social justice news in Southern Oregon.

Join us on Facebook at Ashland Free Press and share your content, ideas, stories and comments.

Send us your submissions via email to ashlandfreepress@activist.com or call the AFP Hotline, 541-622-9483.

Occupy Ashland General Assemblies Return to Downtown Plaza

With Spring's return, the Occupy Ashland General Assemblies are taking place on the Ashland Plaza on Sundays at 2 pm. For more information visit occupyashlandoregon.org

Ashland Homelessness Committee

Canvassing to Legalize Sleep

Saturday, 12:00 pm- 2:00 pm

Location: Ashland Plaza, Ashland, OR

Wednesday 12:00 pm- 2:00 pm

Women in Black Silent Vigils for Peace

Meet in Grants Pass, Cave Junction, Roseburg, Medford, and Ashland to stand silently for Peace.

In Ashland, every Friday from 12:00 - 12:30 pm on the Ashland Plaza.

In Ashland, first and third Saturdays from 11 am - 11:30 am on the Ashland Plaza.

In Medford, every Wednesday, 12:00 to 12:30 pm in Vogel Plaza, corner of Main and Central .

In Grants Pass, every Thursday during the Winter months from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m.next to the Post Office. Contact person Jerry Reed of Citizens for Peace and Justice at 541-474-6847

In Cave Junction, every Monday from 12:00 - 12:30 pm at the County building

In Roseburg, every Friday from 12:30 - 1:00 pm in front of the Fire Station on Garden Valley Blvd.

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Activist Community Calendar

Email your announcements to ashlandfreepress@activist.com or call the AFP Hotline, 541-622-9483.

Cuba Film Series Presents "The Power of Community"

The Cuba Film Series continues at the Ashland Public Library on Wednesday, April 11 at 7 pm. "The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil" is an inspiring film covering a story more relevant for us than ever before in our times of great dependency on costly petroleum. There will be a discussion and information on Cuba both before and after the film. For more information call 541-482-8915. Doors open at 6:45 pm. Sponsored by Peace House, Women's International League of Peace and Freedom in Ashland and the Jackson County Pacific Green Party.

Israeli Peace Activist Dalit Baum will Speak in Ashland

The Unitarian Universalists Social Justice & Action Committee in conjunction with the South Mountain Friends Meeting (Quakers) is pleased to present Israeli professor Dalit Baum, who will give a presentation at the UU Fellowship, 87 4th St., Ashland, on Saturday, April 14th from 5-7 p.m. entitled "The Women's Peace Movement in Israel".

Dr. Baum teaches "Gender and the Global Economy" at Haifa Univ. and Beit Berl College in Israel. She is active in many Israeli organizations including Coalition of Women for Peace and Zochrot. She is currently working with Global Exchange and is the coordinator of the Middle East Program of the American Friends Service Committee. The talk is free and open to the public and is co-sponsored by Dr. Gene & Bonnie Robbins. Please join us in peace for this unusual opportunity.

Please call Natalie Tyler at 541-708-0421 with any questions.

Is Climate Change a Crock? Considering Contrarian Claims

Join Aland Journet Ph.D. for a look at anti-climate change rhetoric. The presentation will take place on Friday, April 13 from 4 pm—5 pm in Room 118 in the Science Hall on the Southern Oregon University Campus. Refreshments and socializing at 3:30 pm in the Science Hall foyer.



COMMUNITY RADIO FOR THE ROGUE VALLEY
KSKQ 89.5 FM is your community owned and operated radio station.

330 East Hersey St. #4
Ashland Oregon

STREAMING LIVE
www.kskq.org

Wild Edible & Medicinal Plants Walks FREE

Saturdays @ Noon Meets up in front of Ashland Food Co-op
meetup.com/greenlivinggroup

Monthly Wellness Faire Begins at Jackson Wellsprings
Saturday, March 31, 2012, 11am - 3pm
Then: 2nd Saturday of each month starting April 14th

Jackson Wellsprings Community Room
2253 Hwy 99 N, Ashland, Oregon 97520
Free Admission

"After being a part of a weekly healing faire in Hana- lei, Kauai, upon my return here to Ashland, my Angelic guidance was to recreate the same beautiful sacred container here in the valley. Building Healthy Community and sharing our gifts of healing, support and love. I am offering to the community a way to meet and connect with professionals/readers/healers/ psychics and an ever expanding menu of modalities and products to facilitate the oft times sheer magic that occurs when many gather with the intention of healing and wholeness. We will be welcoming an uplifting current of live gentle, ambient music as well and are so excited to have this very special way of reconnection and rejuvenation, says Lotus White, faire organizer.

Expect a healing afternoon that allows you to experience the talents and gifts of our local practitioners, psychic readers and various health related professionals, all in a safe, sacred container. Admission is free and mini-sessions are just \$15.00 for twenty minutes from the practitioner of your choice.

I'll see you social consciousness and I'll raise you direct action.

George Mann Concert for the Working Class At Grass Shack Hawaiian Café

An organizer and activist based in New York, George Mann sings songs from the last century of labor and social activism, and his own songs are powerful and funny takes on the state of the nation. His concerts are part sing-along, part history lesson, and he can make you shout for joy, send chills down your spine or bring tears to your eyes in the same set.

George Mann will be visiting us again in Southern Oregon on Earth Day **April 22nd** for a concert for the working class.

The Grass Shack Hawaiian Café in Phoenix
205 Fern Valley Road, Phoenix, OR 97535
For more information visit call 541-482-6988 or visit www.georgemannmusic.com

Alice DiMichele and friends at Applegate Lodge

Saturday, April 14—Featuring: Jeff Pevar, Mikey Stevens, Crystal Reeves and special guests.. Come at 7 pm for a Silent Auction and Raffle! All proceeds from Silent Auction and Raffle will benefit Michael Phlox Mlsna & family show starts at 8pm.

April 15-21, 2012 INDEPENDENT MEDIA WEEK

In April 2005, the City of Ashland, Oregon officially proclaimed its first Independent Media Week. Every year since a coalition of community media supporters have asked the City of Ashland to proclaim a week in April as Independent Media Week.

- * An informed citizenry is a cornerstone of democracy.
- * An informed citizenry depends on unrestrained press, which provides greater access to information, more points of view and greater diversity of thought and fact.
- * The trend toward the consolidation of media ownership has resulted in journalistic practices that hinder public awareness by excluding or marginalizing minority and dissenting viewpoints.
- * Fewer media voices can result in homogenized messaging and the silencing of many points of view.
- * Democratic principles support the case for more independent media in this country, not less.

WE do hereby proclaim the week of April 15 - 21, 2012 as INDEPENDENT MEDIA WEEK and encourage all citizens to seek out and explore the rich diversity of independent media available within, and to our community.

Rogue Valley Growers & Crafters Markets

Community of over 100 vendors and hosting four markets per week — March through November in Ashland and Medford — offering the finest in locally grown produce, plants and flowers, along with specialty foods, cheese, meat, baked goods, wine, ice cream, and hand-made arts and crafts.

Market Hours & Locations

Tuesdays—8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Ashland Market

National Guard Armory 1420 E. Main Street

Thursdays—8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Medford Market

Medford Armory 1701 S. Pacific Highway

Saturdays—9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Ashland Saturday

Market Oak Street in the Heart of Downtown

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Medford Saturday Market Black Oak Village across from RVMC

RVTD Offers Increased Bus Services:

Evenings and Weekends,

You can add one more reason why you should ride the bus rather than drive your car; it just got a bit easier. Beginning April 2, Rogue Valley Transportation District will offer more services. Buses will run through early evenings and on Saturdays.

Route 10 which covers Ashland/Talent/Phoenix will leave the Medford Front Street Station at 7 pm, 7:30 pm, 8:00 pm and 8:30 pm on weekdays. Saturday buses will leave Front Street once each hour from 8 am to 4 pm. Exact schedules can be found on rvtd.org.

April 21 is free fare day and all routes are free, all day long.

RVTD is also connecting riders and drivers with a new ride matching database at drivelessconnect.com.